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U.S. Agent Spies—From an 'Ivory Tower'

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CHICAGO — An "ivory tower" may be an even more strategic vantage point for some United States espionage than a high-flying U-2 plane!

That is the reassurance which the activities here in his "conning tower" on Michigan Avenue of mild-mannered Jacob G. Tolpin may have for those who are worried lest the untoward events surrounding the grounding of the U-2 reconnaissance plane on Russian soil have "pinned down" effective American counter-espionage efforts.

Tolpin looks like a college professor—which is natural, because he really is—since he lectures at Northwestern University. He acts like a scholar, and that also is eminently true because he holds degrees in chemistry and engineering from the University of Kiev in Russia, University of Jena and Columbia University.

However, literally Tolpin also is a "spy" of sorts, but he is what is known in the argot of the espionage as "a white operator," in contrast with an "oppy black," which in spy parlance means the more conventional undercover cloak and dagger agent.

OFFICIALLY, Tolpin is known also as an "agent, intelligence, overt," or one who analyzes foreign technical journals, listens to Russian broadcasts, and interviews refugees, as distinguished from an "agent, intelligence, covert," who is more common to the usual spy legends.

Those in a position to know hint that "agents" like Tolpin have made more solid breakthroughs of secrecy behind the Iron Curtain than the other kind, ever since the U. S. decided "to fight fire with fire" by launching the vaunted Central Intelligence Agency. Of course, the CIA has "agents overt" also, and works closely with the "ivory tower corps," including Tolpin.

The intelligence that enabled President Harry Truman to scoop the Russians by announcing to the world that they had



Known as a "white agent" or an "agent overt" in espionage lingo, Russian-educated Jacob Tolpin, now a U. S. citizen, keeps closer tab on strategic Soviet scientific development than any cloak-and-dagger type could fathom.

conventional spy, but from an "agent overt," analyzing routine reports of radioactivity levels of rainwater trapped in Alaska! "White agents" studying photographs released by the Russians themselves of Sputnik-1 could spot exactly the stage of Soviet rocketry development. Russia, also has "white agents," of course, and if they saw the airplane model makers' magazine that gave detailed data on the U-2 while others thought it was highly secret, they knew all about the plane before one fell into their hands.

IT IS VIRTUALLY impossible to conceal knowledge of scientific development and carry on science at all, Tolpin maintains. The use of scientific journals is indispensable, and Russia now has hundreds. Seven Russian abstracting journals currently are published by the Institute of Scientific Information of the Russian Academy of

who left there shortly after the revolution of 1917 and now is a naturalized U. S. citizen, has, for years, been a specialist on Soviet science and industry, employed by the Standard Oil Company of Indiana. In 1937-1947 he pioneered this high level type of "cerebral espionage" when he edited the "Survey of Foreign Petroleum Literature."

Since scientists consider the exchange of knowledge as an obligation, they regard his work as completely moral and ethical from every standpoint.

At the same time they are awed by what Tolpin finds out by "putting two-and-two together," and fitting each scrap of knowledge he gleans into an elaborate mosaic. After he gave the "score" on current Soviet scientific development in a recent report before the American Institute of Chemical Engineers, many of this nation's most distinguished engineers